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Letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request that the statement that Kenya would have made at the 4139th meeting of the Security Council, concerning the situation in Sierra Leone, be distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fares M. **Kuindwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement to the Security Council by Ambassador F. M. Kuindwa, EGH, EBS, Permanent Representative of Kenya on the situation in Sierra Leone, 11 May 2000

1. Mr. President, my delegation takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to you for convening this very important meeting. We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Fowler of Canada for the able manner in which he conducted the affairs of the Security Council during the month of April.

2. My delegation also fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria, His Excellency Ambassador Baali, on behalf of the Group of African States.

3. The Security Council meets, as it must, at a trying period in the dangerous and rapidly evolving situation in Sierra Leone. The Security Council's responsibility to discuss and act on all matters related to international peace and security, is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that, notwithstanding regional or national efforts, the Charter reserves the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security for the Security Council. This responsibility should be applied uniformly. Regional efforts of necessity remain complementary. My delegation stresses this point in order to place the Sierra Leone situation in its proper context.

4. Kenya's decision to contribute troops to the United Nations peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone was based on the following three main considerations:

(a) First and foremost, the primary role for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations Security Council. As a Member State of the United Nations, Kenya felt duty bound to respond to the request to support the United Nations peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone. Indeed Kenya's traditional support for United Nations peacekeeping is well known;

(b) Secondly, Kenya felt the fraternal responsibility to contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in Sierra Leone and enable the long-suffering people to rebuild their lives;

(c) Finally, that this effort would be fully supported by all Member States as an international effort and that it would not be seen as a purely African affair.

5. As the ECOMOG intervention and the first United Nations operations in Sierra Leone amply illustrated, it is impossible to enforce a fragile peace or ceasefire with limited resources in financial, material or personnel terms. The early lessons of the United Nations Kosovo operation show that the United Nations effort must be properly implemented, well-financed, well-equipped and in numbers sufficient to carry out the mandate, as well as to act as a credible deterrent. The ECOMOG experience in Sierra Leone resulted in major loss of life for its members and unfortunately the UNAMSIL experience today strikes an even more bitter but familiar cord.

6. Kenya would like to suggest a three-track approach to the current situation: an operational track; a political track; as well as a humanitarian track.

7. With regard to the operational track, my delegation strongly supports views expressed and recently endorsed by the 9 May 2000 ECOWAS Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria. We therefore call for:

(a) The speedy deployment of the remaining UNAMSIL contingents authorized under Security Council resolution 1289 (2000);

(b) All troop-contributing countries to UNAMSIL to provide adequate equipment, ammunition and related *matériel* to enable UNAMSIL to effectively implement what is left of its mandate. In this regard, we believe that heavy equipment and show of force will act as a deterrent as well as enable UNAMSIL to carry out its mandate fully;

(c) The urgent review of the mandate of UNAMSIL, with a view to enabling a more robust application of the chapter seven umbrella, and the resultant rules of engagement. In order to maintain a cohesive force with an efficient command and control, enabling on the spot decision-making, there must be better and more efficient communications between Headquarters and the field;

(d) Review the mandate of UNAMSIL to increase the force level in order to facilitate a Kosovo-like deterrent with appropriate artillery and air cover.

8. Allow me to register my Government's concern about the shortfalls of the existing MEDEVAC plan. The current plan keeps wounded soldiers waiting for three to four days. We need to speed up evacuation of casualties. Another aspect concerns out-of-country evacuations, which we hope the troop contributors and DPKO shall soon resolve.

9. It is also necessary for the political track to be deployed vigorously. In this regard, ECOWAS' proposals should be seriously considered by the Security Council;

(a) During ECOWAS' previous mandate, it appointed a group of ministers to conduct negotiations with the parties to the conflict and to become a clearing house, together with the Security Council, on all negotiations. We believe that the resurrection of this approach is critical. We should go back to the drawing board and address the political problem holistically. We strongly believe that one of the main near-term objectives is to locate the missing troops and secure the release of the hostages. In this regard, we commend the approach that ECOWAS has proposed, namely to mandate President Taylor of Liberia to seek out Mr. Sankoh and others and to negotiate a way out;

(b) The Security Council needs to unanimously embrace its responsibilities, as it does with all other missions in Europe and Asia, and re-engage in an energetic and resolute manner. This engagement clearly presupposes more effective use of the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. On this note, my delegation warmly commends the Secretary-General's commitment in addressing this problem. We hope that his call for help and support will be heeded by all, especially those who are better endowed. My delegation also takes this opportunity to express appreciation to Mr. Bernard Miyet, the Under-Secretary-General in charge of Peacekeeping Operations, for visiting Sierra Leone and not only providing

badly needed morale to the troops, but also bringing back useful information that will enable the United Nations take appropriate steps in dealing with the situation.

10. On the humanitarian track, we commend current efforts and encourage rapid distribution of food, medicine, clothing and shelter. It is most appropriate for us to be sensitive and responsive to the urgent needs of the Sierra Leonean people.

11. In conclusion, as we grapple with the crisis in Sierra Leone, and even as we consider immediate measures to cope with it, the international community needs to reflect on the implications of these events on the future of the maintenance of international peace and security and the role of the Security Council in it. Can the Security Council, as currently constituted, carry out its mandate as enshrined in the Charter, especially in the face of a rapidly changing world order? As for now, we need to engage in a discussion about what we really want to achieve in Sierra Leone and whether we have the necessary tools to do so.

12. Kenya again submits that all future and existing peacekeeping mission be given equal and non-discriminatory treatment in respect of financial and administrative arrangements. We continue to express serious concerns at the delay experienced in deploying troops and providing adequate resources to peacekeeping missions in Africa and emphasize that all peacekeeping missions be provided with ample resources in order to effectively and efficiently discharge their respective mandates.

13. It is against this background that Kenya wishes to categorically restate its commitment to support the United Nations peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone and indeed elsewhere.